

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 EB-08 FRB-01 INR-07

NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01

L-03 H-02 DODE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 INT-05 /102 W

-----010402Z 083720 /20

R 310530Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3866

INFO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS MELBOURNE 0740

E O 11652 N A

TAGS EINV, ETRA, AS

SUBJ: VISIT OF PREMIER HAMER

REF 76 MELBOURNE 2165 ET AL NOTAL

1. VICTORIAN PREMIER HAMER AND HIS PARTY RETURNED TO MELBOURNE MARCH 5 VERY PLEASED WITH ALL ASPECTS OF MISSION AND CLAIMING THAT GOALS FOR MISSION, WHICH INCLUDED PROMOTING STATE OF VICTORIA AS BOTH EXCELLENT LOCATION FOR NEW INVESTMENT AND AS TOURIST DESTINATION WERE COMPLETELY FULFILLED.

2. AT DEBRIEFING SESSIONS HELD MAR 18 AND 25 AT PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT, POST LEARNED MAJOR ISSUES WHICH CAME UP DURING MISSION'S NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH BANKS AND CORPORATIONS WERE AUSTRALIA'S URANIUM AND MINERALS POLICY AND ITS FUTURE MONETARY POLICY. OTHER POINTS OFTEN DISCUSSED WERE GOA AND STATE GOVERNMENTS' SUPPORT OF LOCAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, SHIPPING CHARGES, LABOR RELATIONS, PRODUCTIVITY, AND ENERGY AVAILABILITY AND COST. HAMER STATED HE WAS "AMAZED" AT INTEREST OF AMERICAN BUSINESS IN VICTORIAN AND OTHER AUSTRALIAN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES. POINT WAS MADE THAT

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AUSTRALIA'S LABOR RELATIONS WERE MAINLY AN ISSUE AT PRESS INTERVIEWS; U.S. BUSINESS MORE INTERESTED IN AND APPEARED TO UNDERSTAND AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN INVESTMENT GUIDELINES AND WERE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN ENERGY AVAILABILITY AND COSTS. PREMIER HAMER FOUND GREAT INTEREST ON PART OF AMERICAN FOOD PROCESSING FIRMS IN EXPANDING OPERATIONS OR ACQUIRING NEW INVESTMENT HERE FOR USE AS EXPORT BASE FOR SEA AND MIDDLE EAST.

3. NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH ENERGY COMPANIES AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH ENERGY WERE ESPECIALLY APPRECIATED AND CONSIDERED QUITE USEFUL. MISSION IMPRESSED WITH WORK U.S. CURRENTLY DOING ON COAL TO OIL CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY AND AT COST (WHICH WAS QUOTED AT DEBRIEFING SESSION AT DOLS 50 MILLION FOR 50 TON/DAY PLANT).

4. FYI: LOCAL PRESS CARRIED ARTICLE MARCH 25 STATING THAT GROUP OF THREE JAPANESE FIRMS ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD BUILD PILOT PLANT TO CONVERT COAL FROM RICH GIPPSLAND BROWN COAL FIELDS (LARGEST SUCH RESERVES IN WORLD) INTO SOLVENT REFINED COAL (SRC) FOR USE IN PRODUCING HIGHER QUALITY COKE FOR STEEL MAKING. POST COMOFF QUERIED BRIAN COURT, SECRETARY OF VICTORIAN MINISTRY OF FUEL AND POWER ON STORY. COURT STATED THAT THE SRC PROJECT FOR PRODUCING COKING COAL WAS REALLY AN INTERMEDIARY STEP TOWARD ULTIMATE PROJECT OF COVERTING COAL TO OIL. HE STRESSED THAT U.S. FIRMS WERE STILL MUCH IN CONSIDERATION FOR INVOLVEMENT IN ANY FUTURE OIL FROM COAL PROJECT, END FYI.

5. PREMIER HAS THANKED POST FOR ITS COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN A LETTER WHICH IN PART READS "I AM POSITIVE THAT AS A RESULT OF THE

TRIP NEW AND SUBSTANTIAL AMERICAN BUSINESS INTEREST WILL BE FOCUSED IN VICTORIA."

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